

Heartland WARRIOR

A full-page photograph of two firefighters in dark blue uniforms and red helmets rappelling down a white corrugated metal wall. They are secured by red and blue ropes. The background is a clear blue sky.

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U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota

On the cover...

Thomas Carey, left, and Justin Morales, both Grissom Fire Department firefighters, rappel from a training tower on the newly renovated fire training facility at Grissom Nov. 9. The new facility will help provide Grissom firefighters and a other emergency response agencies with mandated training requirements.

SecAF visits Grissom ARB

By Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota
Public Affairs staff

Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James met with 434th Air Refueling Wing Airmen and leadership during a visit to Grissom Air Reserve Base, Ind., Dec. 15-16.

During the visit, the Secretary learned about the base's history and gained a more in-depth understanding of Grissom's mission capabilities and the local communities that support the base.

"My first impression of Grissom was wow!" said James. "You've been involved with every major operation for the past two decades; it's unbelievable the importance of your mission."

"The visit went extremely well," added Col. Doug Schwartz, 434th Air Refueling Wing commander. "This was a great opportunity for her to meet the men and women of the Hoosier Wing and see first-hand the outstanding facilities that we have here as well as learn more about our mission and capabilities."

James' visit began with a dinner in

Wabash, Ind. at the historic Honeywell House where she met with Grissom's leadership and local civic leaders.

"This is an amazing community," said James. "You can really tell that the base has their support."

The following day, James was given a mission briefing and tour of the north-central Indiana base that included visits to a KC-135 simulator and Grissom's new boom operator weapon system trainer. James also had an opportunity to share the tour with Sen. Joe Donnelly and a couple of his staff members as well as U.S. Rep. Jackie Walorski's military legislative assistant.

"This is very realistic," said James as she took the controls of the KC-135 simulator. "What a valuable asset to the pilots [who fly these aircraft]."

Donnelly echoed those words as he took over the controls of the simulator.

"These [simulators] are amazing," concurred Donnelly "I'm honored

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U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota

Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James works the controls of a KC-135R Stratotanker simulator during her visit to Grissom Dec. 16.

Grissom logs record flight hours for FY15



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota

1st Lt. Tim Robertson, 74th Air Refueling Squadron KC-135R Stratotanker pilot, completes his final checks before taking off from Grissom Oct. 20 for a night refueling mission over the Midwest.

**by Staff Sgt.
Katrina Heikkinen**
Public Affairs staff

To fly, fight and win is the basic motto of the United States Air Force and in 2015 the 434th Air Refueling Wing put more flight into the fight than ever before.

The wing logged 7,030 flight hours during fiscal 2015 - a historical record for Grissom and an increase of 36 percent from fiscal 2014.

"The statistics are remarkable," said Col. Doug Schwartz, 434th Air Refueling Wing commander. "This is a tremendous achievement for the entire wing. Everyone deserves a pat on the back for a job well done."

"This is a milestone for Grissom," said Lt. Col. Todd Moody, 74th Air Refueling Squadron director of operations. "We've never flown this many hours in one year alone."

According to Moody, the dramatic increase in flight hours can be attributed to the support Grissom Airmen provided both stateside and overseas in support of extensive deployments to Southwest Asia.

"We had over 3,600 combat flight hours this year, and it proves that we can employ our capabilities because our training prepared us to do so," Moody explained. "This [record] shows that preparation and training at home station provides

what the warfighter needs wherever we deploy to, and kudos to maintenance Airmen for allowing us to accumulate this many flying hours."

In order to carry out the KC-135's Air Mobility Command and aerial refueling mission, Grissom's 434th Maintenance Group maintainers are largely credited for making the 2,000 flight-hour increase a possibility.

"I am very proud of all the maintainers," said Col. Anna Schulte, 434th Maintenance Group commander. "From keeping up with scheduled inspections, to having proactive support personnel from supply and traditional reservists and active reserve technicians working together harmo-

niously - this [achievement] takes all team players coming together."

The 434th Air Refueling Wing holds the record for most aerial refuelings in a one week period when the unit performed 290 aerial refuelings with over one million pounds of fuel offloaded. The unit also set a single day record of refueling 90 aircraft with over 283,000 pounds of fuel offloaded.

"The success of Grissom's record flight hours is a real barometer of the execution of everyone doing their jobs right," said Lt. Col. Brian Hollis, 72nd Air Refueling Squadron director of operations. "Everyone in this wing should take pride in this milestone."

434th MXG receives excellence award

**By Tech. Sgt.
Benjamin Mota**
Public Affairs staff

The 434th Maintenance Group was recently named the recipient of the 2015 Chief Master Sergeant James K. Clouse Maintenance Excellence trophy.

The award is presented to recognize excellence among maintenance organizations within Fourth Air Force.

This annual award recognizes the Fourth Air Force maintenance organization that has achieved the highest standards in safety, mission support, demonstrated ingenuity, mission accomplishments and maintenance excellence.

The Fourth Air Force logistics directorate convenes a board of senior maintenance noncommissioned officers to select the unit that best exemplifies the concepts

recognized by this award. Chief Clouse stood out as an individual who exemplified continuous improvement and value-added change.

As the concept of the trophy crystallized in the early 1980s, an aircraft maintenance equipment specialist on the Fourth Air Force Logistics Maintenance staff, Chief Clouse, was diagnosed with terminal cancer. He succumbed to the disease in 1984.

As a way to honor the significant contributions of Clouse in the career field and as a way to adequately recognize the exceptional job being accomplished by aircraft maintenance people, it was decided that a permanent, revolving trophy awarded annually for maintenance excellence, mission support, ingenuity, cost effectiveness, flight safety, aircraft reliability and maintainability would be established.



Col. Anna Schulte, 434th Maintenance Group commander, poses with the Chief Master Sgt. James K. Clouse Trophy at March Air Reserve Base, Calif., Nov. 20.

Safe haven...

An F-22 Raptors from Joint Base Langley-Eustis, Va. is marshalled into a parking spot at Grissom Oct. 1. In all, 34 F-22 Raptors, eight T-38 Talons and approximately 100 personnel from Joint Base Langley-Eustis came to Grissom seeking shelter from Hurricane Joaquin, a powerful storm that built in the Atlantic in October.



U.S. Air Force photo by Douglas Hays

Grissom cuts 'ribbon' on new fire training facility

By Douglas Hays
Public Affairs staff

With a pull of the trigger and a snip of a fire hose, base officials officially opened a new fire training facility here November 9.

Standing in for a ribbon was a four-inch piece of scrap fire hose, and pneumatic shears upped the ante on the scissor portion of the cutting.

Col. Doug Schwartz, 434th Air Refueling Wing commander, was joined by John Ireland, Grissom fire chief and other base officials as they officially opened the facility.

Moments later two firefighters put on a rappelling demonstration for the crowd of fire fighters, emergency managers, elected officials and others on-hand.

"We have annual training requirements that require live fires twice a year," said Todd Woolf, GFD assistant chief for training.

"Having the updated burn house will allow us to burn more often, and rather than do it twice a year, we can do it whenever we want," he added. "We won't be locked into having to go off base, and worrying about availability."

The \$750,000 project expanded the existing facility from 1,600 square feet to about 4,000 square feet.

The facility uses primarily wood and straw as combustibles and has a tower inside that allows members to train in confined space, elevator rescue, forcible entry training and more.

"The panels in the room can withstand temperatures of 2,200-

degrees Fahrenheit," Ireland said.

"Being a firefighter in civilian job, it's great to see a top-notch training facility here at Grissom," said Chief Master Sgt. Rob Herman, command chief, and firefighter from Omaha, Nebraska. "At the end of the day having better trained, better equipped firefighters benefits us all."

Not only will Grissom firefighters greatly benefit from the new building, other agencies from different counties will also get good use of the facility.

"All around it's just a better situation for everybody," concluded Woolf. "We have existing mutual aid agreements so other agencies can also train with us."

"Kokomo S.W.A.T. has already used the rappelling portion of the facility," Ireland said.



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota

Col. Doug Schwartz, 434th Air Refueling Wing commander, and John Ireland, Grissom Fire Department fire chief, use jaws of life to cut a fire hose while (from left to right) Col. Scott Russell, 434th Mission Support Group commander, Kevin Jefferson, Louisville Army Corps of Engineers representative, Col. Hiram Gates, 434th ARW vice commander, and Chief Master Sgt. Rob Herman, 434th ARW command chief, observe during a ribbon cutting ceremony at Grissom Nov. 9.

Grissom after dark: Fueling the fight

By Tech. Sgt.
Benjamin Mota
Public Affairs staff

Grissom's KC-135R Stratotankers can transfer more fuel in eight minutes than a gas station can pump in 24 hours, but its ability to transfer that fuel after dark moving at speeds up to 500 mph is truly amazing.

The 72nd and 74th Air Refueling Squadrons conduct around the clock operations and training in order to meet Air Force mission objectives.

"Our primary mission is

to provide aerial refueling to enhance the Air Force's mission of global reach and global power," said Col. Doug Schwartz, 434th Air Refueling commander. "Our ability to operate around the clock is a key asset that allows us to accomplish those missions."

That around the clock capability was demonstrated during a recent nighttime aerial refueling mission over Southern Kansas. During the flight a 434th ARW KC-135 refueled a B-2 Spirit from the 509th Bomb Wing, Whiteman Air Force Base, Missouri.

"One of our biggest challenges during nighttime refueling is depth perception," said Master Sgt. Christopher Nack. "We have to rely on visual cues like the shadows from the boom onto the receiver aircraft to help us judge the distance between them."

"Those shadows are produced by the natural light from the moon and stars," added Nack.


Each boom operator is required to complete a certain number of nighttime refueling hours to maintain their qualifications.

"Regardless of weather

or lighting conditions, we have to be able to accomplish the mission in order to maintain global reach," explained Nack.

When lighting conditions are not optimal, boom operators and pilots rely on artificial light to conduct the mission.

"You never know what the sky is going to be like above the clouds," said Senior Airman Zach Holmes, 74th Air Refueling Squadron inflight refueling technician. "If there isn't enough artificial light we have rely on lights on the outside of the aircraft."



A B-2 Spirit from the 509th Bomb Wing, 13th Bomb Squadron Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., prepares to be refueled by a KC-135R Stratotanker from the 434th Air Refueling Wing at Grissom Air Reserve Base, Ind. during a nighttime aerial refueling mission over Southern Kansas, Oct. 21.

U.S. Air Force photos by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota



Left: Lights from the cockpit of a KC-135R Stratotanker from the 434th Air Refueling Wing at Grissom shine bright during a nighttime aerial refueling mission over Southern Kansas, Oct. 21.

The KC-135 has a system of exterior lights located on the belly of the aircraft just behind the nose gear and flood lights on the boom pod used to pass fuel to the receiver aircraft.

“We are in constant communication with the receiving aircraft,” explained Holmes. “Using the belly lights, we have the ability to position the receiver aircraft in the optimal position to receive fuel.”

“Being able to receive fuel at any hour is critical on the battlefield,” said Lt. Col. Rich Day, 74th Air Refueling Squadron pilot. “The training we receive from these local missions prepares us for what we do when we are deployed.”

“At night we lose a certain amount of our depth perception and rely heavily on our instruments, because it is easy

to become disoriented,” explained Day. “You do it a lot and you get used to it, but without practicing that wouldn’t be the case.”

“Doing it a lot” is something the 434th Air Refueling Wing does well, and last year the wing demonstrated just that when it logged a historical record of 7,030 flight hours for fiscal 2015.

“We had over 3,600 combat flight hours this year, and it proves that we can employ our capabilities because our training prepared us to do so,” Lt. Col. Todd Moody, 74th Air Refueling Squadron director of operations. “This [record] shows that preparation and training at home station provides what the warfighter needs wherever we deploy to, and kudos to maintenance Airmen for allowing us to accumulate this many flying hours.”



Above: Lt. Col. Rich Day, 74th Air Refueling Squadron pilot, operates the controls of a 434th Air Refueling Wing KC-135R Stratotanker from Grissom during a nighttime aerial refueling mission over Southern Kansas, Oct. 21.

319th FIS reunites, tours Grissom

By Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota
Public Affairs staff

Base tours are commonly used to educate the public, but a recent group of tourists taught Airman a thing or two as they toured their old home and shared their rich heritage along the way.

More than 30 former Airmen from the 319th Fighter Interceptor Squadron Association and their guests participated in a base tour here, Sept. 25.

"It's important that we continue to share our history," said Dave Headen, 319th FISA member and tour coordinator. "Each year we pick a location for a reunion; this year we chose Grissom because the squadron was once located here."

The 319th FIS was created as part of the 325th Fighter Group in 1942 and served until its deactivation in 1977. It was located at Grissom, formerly Bunker Hill Air Force Base, from 1955 until 1963.

"Having an opportunity to see our old home is something special for so

many of our members," explained Headen who was stationed here between 1955 and 1961. "It's amazing how the base has changed over the years."

During the tour, visitors had an opportunity to see Grissom's propulsion shop and witness how technology has changed the engines.

"They have come a long -long way from when I first started working on engines," said Headen.

Despite the changes in technology, the camaraderie and pride of the group's heritage still remains the same.

"Each member had a story to tell, and listening to their experiences and memories was something I won't forget," said Staff Sgt. Zack Gibson, 434th Maintenance Squadron aerospace propulsion journeyman. "The group was like one big family, and even though they are now veterans, they still treated us like family."

"It just goes to show that the military is something that sticks with you, even after you leave," he

added.

After visiting the engine-shop, the group had an opportunity to tour a KC-135R Stratotanker, where pilots and crewmembers showed them around the aircraft and answered questions.

"Prior to this, the only time I had ever seen a KC-135 was from the receiving end," said retired Lt. Col. Robert Sweetwood, a former Air Force fighter pilot. "I was really impressed by the quality and condition of the aircraft and the base all together."

The tour was part of 319th FISA's 24th reunion and included members from all eras of the association's history.

"Keeping our history alive is very important," added Sweetwood. "The camaraderie you had between the people you served with is a lifelong thing."

"Getting together once a year allows you to renew that; we remembered what we did for our country even through the difficult times," he concluded.

More than 30 former Airmen from the 319th Fighter Interceptor Squadron Association and their guests pose for a photo next to a 434th Air Refueling Wing KC-135R Stratotanker during a tour at Grissom Sept. 25. The 319th FIS was located at Grissom, formerly Bunker Hill Air Force Base, from 1955 until 1963.



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota

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to have the opportunity to meet [Secretary James] and see first-hand the mission at Grissom.”

The tour moved from simulator to the real thing as the wing showcased one of Grissom’s 16 KC-135R Stratotankers. Crewmembers and maintainers showed her around the aircraft and answered questions.

“I am blown away by the condition of your aircraft!” explained James. “They truly are a testament to pride your maintainers take in their work.”

As the visit progressed,

James met with Hoosier Wing Airmen during a luncheon. She highlighted several key topics with the Airmen in attendance including resiliency, innovation and career development.

“I couldn’t have gotten where I am today without good mentors and a lot of resiliency,” she said. “Be prepared to zig-zag in life; you will have your ups and downs, but when you are down you have to bounce back.”

James also discussed the importance of every Airman and what they bring

to the mission.

“There is no substitute to engaging with Airmen in person,” said James. “Each of you brings valuable assets to the mission.”

Airmen asked questions and listened to the advice she had to offer.

“Meeting the SecAF was a great opportunity for me and gave me an insight of how the Reserve and our mission fit into the big picture,” said Senior Airman Courtney Dotson-Essett, 434th Maintenance Squadron hydraulics specialist. “It

really shows that what I do in the Air Force matters and makes a difference.”

James concluded her visit by reassuring Airmen that reservists will continue to play a vital role in the defense of our country in the future.

“We continue to rely on reserve units more and more, and we are going to continue to build up their end strength,” she said. “Continue to keep up the good work; everyone is proud of what you are doing with the KC-135 and its mission.”



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota

Col. Douglas Schwartz, 434th Air Refueling Wing commander (right), discusses the impact of Grissom’s mission with Secretary of the Air Force Deborah Lee James and Haj Job, 434th ARW honorary commander, in Wabash Ind., Dec. 16.

Grissom hosts Fall Foliage 5K, walk

By Staff Sgt. Katrina Heikkinen
Public Affairs staff

Hoosier leaves fell to the ground as the syncopated beat of footsteps hit the beaten path of the base.

With clear blue skies and crisp autumn weather in the air, 20 Grissom Airmen participated in a Fall Foliage 5K and walk, here Sept. 30.

"This was my second 5K at Grissom and I thought it was a great way to get my blood pumping, a fun way to exercise and to also help prepare me for a physical training test," said Kirsten O'Brien, 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron medical technician.

While some participants enjoyed the scenic route at a leisurely pace, for Anthony Strzalka, 434th Civil Engineer Squadron Explosive Ordnance Disposal, his final time of 19 minutes and 30 seconds earned him first place.

Being a practitioner of practice what you preach, Arletta Eldridge-thompson, 434th Force Support Squadron exercise physiologist, was eager to participate in the 5K.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Katrina Heikkinen

Twenty Grissom Airmen set a fast pace at the start of a Fall Foliage 5K hosted and walk hosted by the 434th Security Forces Squadron at Grissom Sept. 30.

"Being new to the base, I thought this event would be a good opportunity to meet people and enjoy the nice weather," Eldridge-thompson said. "Hosting fun events like this 5K is important because it encourages lifetime fitness, not just passing the running component of a PT test."

The 434th Force Support Center fitness center hosts fitness runs throughout the year.

"This was a great event for the base to come together as a community and help get them ready for their next PT test," said Bruce Cannady, 434th Force Support Squadron fitness center director.

Ballas takes command of the 434th CES

By Staff Sgt.
Katrina Heikkinen
Public Affairs staff

Lt. Col. James Ballas, accepted the guidon and command of the 434th Civil Engineer Squadron during a change of command ceremony here Dec. 5.

"It's the honor of my career to serve in our Air Force as a squadron commander and lead the 434th CES," Ballas said. "I'm grateful for the opportunity to be a part of Team Grissom, the 434th Mission Support Group, and advance the civil engineer and emergency

forces mission."

Ballas previously served at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, North Carolina, before coming to the Hoosier state.

"I'm excited about the 434th ARW mission and Grissom's reputation of taking care of its people," he said. "I have been very fortunate throughout my career to work for commanders that prioritized the mission and our Airmen as the core focus. When we take care of our people and empower them with the right resources and opportunities, they accomplish amazing things."



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Katrina Heikkinen

Lt. Col. James Ballas, right, accepts command of the 434th Civil Engineer Squadron from Col. Scott Russell, 434th Mission Support Group commander, during a change of command ceremony at Grissom Dec. 5.

Exercise physiologist keeps Grissom Airmen fit to fight

By Staff Sgt.
Katrina Heikkinen
Public Affairs staff

The Air Force chief of staff's vision of fitness is one that supports a year-round culture of fitness. For one member of Grissom Air Reserve Base, she has spread that culture for over 20 years at five Air Force bases.

As the new 434th Force Support Squadron exercise physiologist, Arletta Eldridge-Thompson oversees Grissom's fitness program and helps ensure Airmen are fit to fight.

"I'm very excited to be here at Grissom," Eldridge-Thompson said. "The facilities are great, the people are kind and Airmen are excited to try new things for healthy living."

Eldridge-Thompson said her greatest priority is addressing factors that may negatively impact Airmen's physical training assessment score.

"During my time working in the Air Force - both active duty and Reserve - when I see Airmen struggle with their PT test, it's usually because of three reasons - diet, sleep and exercise," she said. "If those three things can be addressed, not only do Airmen feel better, but they perform better and can live longer."

To ensure all Grissom Airmen are fit to fight, Eldridge-Thompson offers one-on-one appointments covering a range of health-related behaviors, including nutrition, exercise and tobacco cessation.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Katrina Heikkinen

Arletta Eldridge-Thompson, 434th Force Support Squadron exercise physiologist, and Bruce Cannady, 434th FSS fitness center director, complete paperwork at Grissom Oct. 14.

"I work with Airmen to provide them with the tools they need to improve and/or maintain [their health]," she said.

Though Eldridge-Thompson's vocation advocates for lifestyle health and fitness and its direct impact on mission accomplishment, she also leads by example.

"I don't compromise on diet, sleep and exercise," she added. "I exercise every day that I work, but I don't do it just to lead by example, I do it because it's a stress reliever and I want to be healthy."

According to Eldridge-Thompson, the most challenging and exciting aspect of her job is seeing Airmen enact positive behavioral

changes.

"I feel like I was born to be an exercise physiologist," she said. "I love being able to interact with people and give them the tools to lead a healthy lifestyle. Many people are engrained in their behavior, which can be hard to change, especially for traditional reservists who are here only one weekend a month."

"But you can get fit on any type of a budget - you just have to look at your resources," she said. "Exercising doesn't need to be difficult - I get on the treadmill and set it to a high incline and walk one big hill."

Eldridge-Thompson said although making permanent lifestyle

changes can be difficult, all Airmen are responsible for maintaining required physical fitness standards.

A native of Hardesty, Oklahoma, Eldridge-Thompson earned a bachelor's degree in biology from Southwestern Oklahoma State University, and a master's degree in exercise physiology from Auburn University. A new Hoosier and potential Boilermaker, Eldridge-Thompson hopes to pursue a doctorate degree in exercise physiology from Purdue University in the future.

For more information or to schedule an appointment with Eldridge-Thompson, call 688-2987.

Grissom Airmen earn CCAF degrees

By Staff Sgt. Katrina Heikkinen

Public Affairs staff

Twenty-five Airmen assigned to the 434th Air Refueling Wing recently earned their Community College of the Air Force degrees.

Below are the names of those earning their associates in applied science degrees in the following areas of study:

Aerospace Ground Equipment Technology

Master Sgt. Kenneth Pinaire, 434th Maintenance Squadron

Tech. Sgt. Michael Johnting, 434th MXS

Tech. Sgt. Kevin Mortier, 434th MXS

Aircrew Safety Systems Technology

Staff Sgt. Kellin Hardin, 434th Operations Support Squadron

Allied Health Sciences

Tech. Sgt. Kandi Delee, 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron

Aviation Maintenance Technology

Senior Master Sgt. Debra Bernhardt, 434th Maintenance Group

Master Sgt. Donald Creech, 434th MXS

Master Sgt. Jose Gomez, 434th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

Aviation Management

Senior Master Sgt. Laura Hayden, 74th Air Refueling Squadron

Senior Master Sgt. Jonna Sullivan, 434th OSS

Aviation Operations

Tech. Sgt. Courtney Storey, 434th OSS

Avionic Systems Technology

Staff Sgt. Sarah Lindley, 434th AMXS

Criminal Justice

Tech. Sgt. Timothy Holmgren, 434th Security Forces Squadron

Tech. Sgt. Marlon Calma, 434th SFS

Dental Assisting

Staff Sgt. Anthony Hall, 434th AMDS

Dietetics and Nutrition

Tech. Sgt. Evangeline Degillo, 434th AMDS

Diagnostic Imaging Technology

Tech. Sgt. Shannon Fuller, 434th AMDS

Education and Training Management

Master Sgt. Deborah Wilson-Strong, 434th Force Support Squadron

Electronic Systems Technology

Tech. Sgt. Zachary Felten, 434th Communications Squadron

Human Resource Management

Master Sgt. Tonya Gonzales, 434th SFS

Senior Airman Linda Stovall, 434th FSS

Maintenance Production Management

Tech. Sgt. Timothy Hayataka, 434th SFS

Mechanical and Electrical Technology

Senior Airman Dimitar Mihaylov, 434th Civil Engineer Squadron

Practical Nursing Technology

Staff Sgt. Kirsten O'Brien, 434th AMDS

Transportation

Senior Airman Nataliya Manning, 434th Logistics Readiness Squadron



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota

Community Collage of the Air Force graduates pose for a photo during a CCAF graduation at Grissom Dec. 5.

Women in service: AF lifts direct combat exclusion rule

By U.S. Air Force
Public Affairs Staff

WASHINGTON—Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Martin Dempsey announced today the rescission the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule for women and that the Department of Defense plans to remove gender-based barriers to service.

“Women have shown great courage and sacrifice on and off the battlefield, contributed in unprecedented ways to the military’s mission and proven their ability to serve in an expanding number of roles,” Panetta said. “The Department’s goal in rescinding the rule is to ensure that the mission is met with the best-qualified and most capable people, regardless of gender.”

While 99 percent of Air Force positions are currently open to women, Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III said the service will now pursue opening the final 1 percent.

“2013 marks the twentieth anniversary of the Department of Defense allowing women to serve as combat pilots,” Welsh said. “By rescinding the 1994 Direct Ground Combat Definition and Assignment Rule, we can pursue integrating women into the seven remaining Air Force career fields still closed, all associated with special operations. We’re focused on ensuring America’s Air Force remains capable and ready with the best-qualified people serving where we need them.”

The Air Force will partner with U.S. Special Operations Command and the other services to review opening these positions in a deliberate, measured, and responsible way, officials said. Those positions are:

Officer / Enlisted Air Force Specialty Codes closed to women:

- 13DXA (Combat Control Officer - special operations forces / direct ground combat)

- 13DXB (Combat Rescue/Special Tactics Officer - special operations forces / direct ground combat)

- 15WXC (Special Operations Weather Officer - special operations forces / direct ground combat)

- 1C2XX (Enlisted Combat Controller - special operations forces / direct ground combat)

- 1C4XX (Enlisted Tactical Air Command and Control - some special operations forces / direct ground combat)

- 1T2XX (Enlisted Pararescue - special operations forces / direct ground combat)

- 1W0X2 (Enlisted Special Operations Weather - special operations forces / direct ground combat)

These career fields comprise approximately 3,235 positions.

Today, women make up approximately 15 percent, or nearly 202,400, of the U.S. military’s 1.4 million active personnel. Over the course of the past decade, more than 280,000 women have deployed in support of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Today’s announcement follows an extensive review by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who unanimously concluded that now is the time to move forward with the full intent to integrate women into occupational fields to the maximum extent possible.

It builds on a February 2012 decision to open more than 14,000 additional positions to women by rescinding the co-location restriction and allowing women to be assigned to select positions in ground combat units at the battalion level.

“The Joint Chiefs share common cause on the need to start doing this now and to doing this right. We are committed to a purposeful and principled approach,” said Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Martin Dempsey.

The DoD is determined to successfully integrate women into the remaining restricted occupational fields within our military, while adhering to the following guiding

principles developed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

- Ensuring the success of our nation’s warfighting forces by preserving unit readiness, cohesion, and morale.

- Ensuring all service men and women are given the opportunity to succeed and are set up for success with viable career paths.

- Retaining the trust and confidence of the American people to defend this nation by promoting policies that maintain the best quality and most qualified people.

- Validating occupational performance standards, both physical and mental, for all military occupational specialties (MOS), specifically those that remain closed to women. Eligibility for training and development within designated occupational fields should consist of qualitative and quantifiable standards reflecting the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary for each occupation. For occupational specialties open to women, the occupational performance standards must be gender-neutral as required by Public Law 103-160, Section 542 (1993).

- Ensuring that a sufficient cadre of midgrade/senior women enlisted and officers are assigned to commands at the point of introduction to ensure success in the long run. This may require an adjustment to recruiting efforts, assignment processes, and personnel policies. Assimilation of women into heretofore “closed units” will be informed by continual in-stride assessments and pilot efforts.

Using these guiding principles, positions will be opened to women following service reviews and the congressional notification procedures established by law. Panetta directed the military departments to submit detailed plans by May 15, 2013, for the implementation of this change, and to move ahead expeditiously to integrate women into previously closed positions. The secretary’s direction is for this process to be complete by Jan. 1, 2016. (AFNS)

Proactive measures prevent identity theft

By Staff Sgt.
Katrina Heikkinen
Public Affairs staff

According to Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark Welsh, cyber and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance mission synergy will continue to be the biggest areas of future Air Force growth.

With that in mind and the amount of massive data breaches headlining the news on a daily basis, Airmen should safeguard personally identifiable information to avoid becoming a victim of identity theft.

"Identity theft is a crime that involves the illegal access and use of an individuals' personal or financial information," said Katina Dimitro, 434th Force Support Squadron Airman and Family Readiness Center personal financial counselor. "It can seriously damage a victim's credit history, result in a financial loss, impact their medical records - and ultimately an Airman's future in the Air Force."

The Office of Personnel Management recently announced that 25.1 million individuals' background investigation records had been stolen.

Aside from OPM's records data breach, other factors that increase Airmen's risk for identity theft include the nature of mobility in the Air Force.

"Military members are always on the go," Dimitro said. "For Airmen on long deployments away from home, to traditional reservists traveling to and from out of state, to simply using a debit card at multiple



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Katrina Heikkinen

Katina Dimitro, 434th Force Support Squadron Airman and Family Readiness Center financial counselor, discusses identity protection measures during a meeting at Grissom Oct. 9.

locations - anyone is at risk of having their information stolen."

Dimitro provides both one-on-one meetings and group briefings to educate Airmen on steps they can take to prevent identity theft, and in the event an Airman becomes a victim of identity theft, reactive measures.

"The biggest obstacle is that most people don't work preventatively," she said. "They wait until something bad happens and then they come see me. It can be a lot harder to fix financial problems such as fraudulent taxes once they've happened then to prevent them from happening at all."

According to Dimitro, the first proactive step all Airmen should take is to run a credit report, followed by placing a fraud alert on their account.

"Everything that has to do with protecting your identity can be done for

free and it can be done with the help of the Airman and Family Readiness Center's personal financial counseling," Dimitro said. "By running a credit report, you increase your ability to become aware of what's going on with your finances, as well as learning if you have been a victim of fraud. Three out of five people I work with see either errors or collection accounts that they were not aware existed. All of the financial services I provide are free, confidential and private."

In addition to running a credit report, Dimitro suggests Airmen place a security/credit freeze through the state attorney general's office to prevent anyone from opening an account in an individuals' name.

"The best preventative measure is to make sure you're securing your documents," she said. "Make sure you're shredding important documents instead

of just throwing them away in the trash. Educate yourself on how to protect yourself - read your medical bills to ensure someone isn't taking your identity; conduct credit reports on your children to safeguard their identity; and don't post public resumes with personally identifiable information that contain your past work and addresses."

Dimitro also provides additional referral sources for Airmen in the event they do become a victim of identity theft, including assisting Airmen with filing a police report.

"Financial considerations are factors in Airmen obtaining and maintaining a security clearance in the Air Force," she said. "Know your resources and utilize the Airman and Family Readiness Center."

For more information or to schedule a meeting, contact Dimitro at (765) 688-4812.

12 Grissom Airmen recently awarded medals

By Staff Sgt. Katrina Heikkinen
Public Affairs staff

For their meritorious service in the Air Force, 12 Grissom Airmen were recently awarded medals.

Air Medal

Six aircrew members were presented with Air Medals. The Air Medal was established May 11, 1942 and is awarded to U.S. military and civilian personnel for single acts of heroism or meritorious achievements while participating in aerial flight and foreign military personnel in actual combat in support of operations. Below are those who received Air Medals:

- Lt. Col. Michael Hoke, 74th Air Refueling Squadron
- Capt Timothy McBee, 74th ARS
- 1st Lt. Brandon Giles, 74th ARS
- 1st Lt. Jonathan Pridgeon, 74th ARS
- Master Sgt. Anthony Krisher,

434th Operations Support Squadron

- Master Sgt. Nicholas Obusek, 74th ARS

Aerial Achievement Medal

Two officers were awarded the Aerial Achievement Medal, which is awarded by the Department of the Air Force to U.S. military and civilian personnel for sustained meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight. The following received the Aerial Achievement Medal:

- Lt. Col. Michael Hoke, 74th ARS
- 1st Lt. Timothy Robertson, 74th ARS

Air Force Commendation Medal

One officer and three Airmen received Air Force Commendation Medals. This medal was authorized by the Secretary of the Air Force on March 28, 1958, for award to members of the Armed Forces

of the United States who distinguished themselves by meritorious achievement and service. Below are those who received commendation medals:

- Capt. Jacob Hollingsworth, 434th Security Forces Squadron
- Tech. Sgt. Chris Fancher, 434th SFS
- Tech. Sgt. Gregory Moolenaar, 434th SFS
- Staff Sgt. Nathan Lush, 434th SFS

Air Force Achievement Medal

One Grissom Airman was awarded the Air Force Achievement Medal. This medal was authorized by the Secretary of the Air Force on Oct. 20, 1980, and is awarded to Air Force personnel for outstanding achievement or meritorious service rendered specifically on behalf of the Air Force. Below are those who received achievement medals:

- 1st Lt. Donald Yoakem, 434th Civil Engineer Squadron



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Mota

Airmen from the 434th Logistics Readiness Squadron pose for a group photo on Grissom's flightline Aug. 12.

Sixty-six Airmen selected for promotion

By Staff Sgt. Katrina Heikkinen
Public Affairs staff

From their first to their last, America's Airmen earn each stripe.

Sixty-six 434th Air Refueling Wing Airmen were recently promoted here.

Their names are as follows:

To master sergeant

Leslie Heron, 434th Operations Group

Bobby Horton, 434th Maintenance Squadron

Gregory Moolenaar, 434th Security Forces Squadron

Deborah Sweet, 434th Maintenance Group

To technical sergeant

Daniel Apolinar, 434th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

Andrew Fox, 434th Civil Engineer Squadron

Justin Fullerton, 434th CES

Thomas Garrod, 434th AMXS

Jose Hernandez, 434th CES

Brian Huntsman, 434th AMXS

Kaci Jankins, 434th MXS

Nicholas Knauff, 434th MXS

Alina Palmer, 434th AMXS

Kenneth Palmer, 434th AMXS

Wesley Potts, 434th AMXS
Dustin Rentfrow, 434th Force Support Squadron
Christin Rudell, 434th Aerospace Medicine Squadron
Phillip Steffen, 434th CES
Ryan Strole, 434th AMXS
George Tijerina, 434th MXG

To staff sergeant

Cory Beck, 74th Air Refueling Squadron

John Bullock, 434th AMXS

Brendan Carney, 434th CES

Lance Chase, 434th CES

Anthony Chico, 434th CES

Takiyah Hall, 434th MXG

Sean Hart, 434th AMXS

Jami Lancette, 434th Air Refueling Wing

Andrew Mercer, 434th AMXS

Christopher Miller, 434th Operations Support Squadron

Kevin Peters, 434th MXS

Amy Richmond, 434th AMDS

Eric Rosson, 434th SFS

Paul Schoentrup, 434th OSS

Brittany Wildman, 434th AMDS

To senior airman

Laith Alsakkal, 434th MXS

Kyle Argyle, 434th FSS

Stephanie Briones, 434th FSS

Kyndal Brooks, 434th CES

Logan Devos, 434th AMDS
Sheray Gilmore, 434th FSS
Elias Gregoriou, 434th MXS
Christopher Heet, 434th Communications Squadron
David Heisterman, 434th FSS
Tynisha Henry, 434th FSS
Alyssa Hood, 434th AMDS
Connor O'Donnell, 434th AMXS
Malik Okosi, 434th AMXS
Kiara Reed, 434th FSS
Andrew Sislo, 434th CES

To airman 1st class

Istvan, Banuelos, 434th FSS
Benjamin Gaskins, 434th Logistics Readiness Squadron

Heather Manship, 434th MXS

Caitlin Mitchell, 434th CES

Sidney Morgan, 434th FSS

Randi Smith, 434th AMDS

Hunter Tobey, 434th MXS

Caleb Williams, 434th AMXS

To airman

Abla Commissaire, 434th LRS

Wesley Crabb, 434th MXS

Corey Eslick, 434th CES

Justin Harter, 434th SFS

James Kraniak, 434th MXS

Tamia Nunn, 434th FSS

David Shaw, 434th LRS

Anthony Strzalka, 434th CES

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Contact Senior Master Sgt. David Williford at
(765) 688-2020 for more information.

U.S. Air Force graphic by Staff Sgt. Katrina Heikkinen